

**IOWA** Department of Education

Kindergarten and ELI

<https://www.educateiowa.gov/early-literacy-implementation>

## Early Literacy Implementation (ELI)

### On this page...

- [Legal Requirements](#)
- [Guidance](#)
- [Technical Assistance Sessions](#)
- [Archived Webinars, Supporting Documents, and Information](#)
- [Iowa TIER and FAST/IGDIs](#)

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# Agenda



1. Purpose and definitions
2. Table – conditions for enrollment, standards, assessment and funding
3. Critical Clarifications
4. Questions and Answers

## Purpose

To provide guidance for Iowa's public schools specific to the definition, condition for enrollment, required standards and assessments and funding for all types of kindergarten programs.

This guidance is specific to programs under the authority of the Iowa Department of Education including state aid for kindergarten programs and special education weighting.

## Reminder of Rule

Iowa public schools are required to assess all K-3 students at the beginning of the school year and intermittently throughout the year using a Department-approved universal screening assessment.

This includes all kindergarten programming.



## Definitions

***Prekindergarten/Preschool:*** Programming for children whom are not kindergarten age eligible. These children may or may not receive state funding based on the program and the services they receive. This includes Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs and Early Childhood Special Education instructional services as specified on the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

***Kindergarten:*** Programming for children who are kindergarten age eligible and for whom the district receives K-12 student aid.

# Preschool and Kindergarten

Program	Age	Conditions for Enrollment	Standards	Assessment	State Funding		
					SWVPP	Special Education	Certified Enrollment
Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children [SWVPP]	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child is a resident of Iowa</li> <li>Open Enrollment does not apply</li> </ul>	Iowa Early Learning Standards (IELS)	GOLD online assessment [required]  IGDIs online assessment for Universal Screening [optional]	Yes	No	.5
	4-IEP support services only				Yes	No	.5
	4 – IEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child is a resident of Iowa</li> <li>Open Enrollment applies</li> </ul>			No	Yes	1.0 + special education through weighting
Kindergarten [Age on or before 9/15]	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open Enrollment applies</li> <li>Grade Level is District Determined</li> </ul>	Iowa Core	District Determined Assessments [required]  DE approved universal screening assessment. The DE supports administration of FAST. FAST may also be used as the district's KLA measure. [required]	No	No	1.0
	5 – IEP support services only				No	No	1.0
	5 – IEP				No	Yes	1.0 + special education through weighting

# Kindergarten Programming

## Educational Standards

- Iowa Core for Kindergarten, Iowa Code § 256.7(28)

## Instructional Time

- “The kindergarten program shall include experiences designed to develop healthy emotional and social habits and growth in the language arts and communication skills, as well as a capacity for the completion of individual tasks, and protect and increase physical well-being with attention given to experiences relating to the development of life skills and human growth and development.” Iowa Code § 256.11(2)

# Kindergarten Programming

## Length of day

- At minimum, the kindergarten day must be half of the length of the elementary day

Elementary grade length of day = 6 hours/5 days

Kindergarten length of day = 3 hours/5 days, at minimum

- The kindergarten day must be half of the hours offered annually

Elementary grade hours= 1080 hours

Kindergarten hours= 540 hours, at minimum

# Kindergarten Programming

## Assessment

- District Determined assessments for kindergarten
- Iowa Code § 279.60 Kindergarten Literacy Assessment (KLA)  
Administer a valid and reliable universal screening instrument as prescribed by the Iowa Department of Education( DE) to every kindergarten student enrolled in the district no later than October 1
- Iowa Code § 279.68 Early Literacy Implementation  
Assess all student enrolled in kindergarten through grade three at the beginning of each school year for their level of reading or reading readiness on locally determined or statewide assessments that meet minimum standards for reliability and validity established by the DE

## Other District Programs

The Department recognizes that the below occurs in some districts.

- Kindergarten-age eligible children may be part of a multi-grade classroom meeting both SWVPP and kindergarten standards; or
- 5 year old children attend programs such as transitional, alternative, beginning, or other terms to indicate programming prior to kindergarten.

Transitional kindergartens or junior kindergartens are viewed as kindergarten programming. Expectations regarding learning standards and assessments for kindergarten must be met.

## Critical Clarification

It is the Department's position that these grade placement practices conflict with the purpose of Iowa Code 279.68: Early intervention to prevent later skill deficits.

## Critical Clarification

Serving five year olds in SWVPP and alternative type kindergarten programs **often** conflict with the concept of early intervention in the following ways:

- It is difficult to ascertain which standards these programs use. Learners in these programs may not be taught to the Iowa Core standards even though they are Kindergarten age.
- Instructional time received may be less than what is received by learners who attend Kindergarten.
  - This is counter-intuitive. If these learners lack skills, they should be provided with more opportunities, not fewer.
- The goal of the program should be to increase the trajectory of learning for children. However, it is many times communicated that the learners will not be considered for first grade.

## Critical Clarification

Once a child has completed any programming prior to kindergarten [e.g., transitional, alternative, beginning] and is age eligible for first grade, there are two options:

- The child attends kindergarten.
  - If 1.0 funding was used to support a child to attend previous programming such as transitional, alternative or beginning programs, then the child would be considered as being retained in kindergarten.
- The child attends first grade.
  - If 1.0 funding was used to support a child to attend previous programming such as transitional, alternative or beginning programs, then the child would be considered as being appropriately promoted to first grade

## Early Literacy Implementation

- Iowa Code § 279.68 is applicable in all types of kindergarten programs.
- Kindergarten age eligible children who are in kindergarten programming funded by 1.0 student aid must be assessed according to ELI requirements.
  - This includes transitional or junior kindergarten programs.
- Districts should view and interpret universal screening data for students in kindergarten programs as a whole in order to have the best picture of the health of the system.
  - Districts should not disaggregate student scores by kindergarten program type, i.e. disaggregate transitional kindergarten

## Early Literacy Implementation

- In reviewing universal screening data for students in kindergarten programs, children who have scored below the benchmark once are identified as at-risk of having a substantial deficiency in reading and are required to receive weekly progress monitoring.
- Children who have scored below the benchmark for two consecutive testing windows should be considered substantially deficient.
  - Any requirements for students who have been identified as substantially deficient must be followed in accordance with Iowa Code § 279.68.

## Early Literacy Implementation

- Students who attend two years of kindergarten programming are viewed as being retained during the second kindergarten year.
  - Students in a kindergarten called “TK” who then go to a second year of kindergarten are considered as retained.
- Retaining a child in kindergarten does not mean a child will not be retained in later years based on ELI requirements:
  - Students who have been retained in a previous school year must have also received intensive remediation in reading for at least two years to avoid retention in Grade 3

## Questions from the Audience

What questions do  
YOU have?

